



Senators Boxer and Feinstein Team Up with Rep. Thompson on
Northern California Coastal Wilderness Bill
March 3, 2004

Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Representative Mike Thompson (D-CA) today announced an agreement on the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act.

The legislation, which was introduced by Senator Boxer and Representative Thompson last year, would permanently protect almost 300,000 acres and preserve over 21 miles of the Black Butte River in Representative Thompson's district along the Northern California coast.

Boxer said: **"I am pleased that Senator Feinstein, Representative Thompson and I were able to work together and come to an agreement on this Wilderness Bill. It is so important that we preserve our lands and protect endangered wildlife so that future generations will be able to experience the great beauty of Northern California's Coast."**

Feinstein said: **"This bill permanently preserves 300,000 acres along California's northern coast. These lands, which include the King Range, are some of the most striking and beautiful lands in all California. Our wildlands are vanishing. We need to preserve what's left. This bill takes an important step toward that goal. My great thanks go to Senator Boxer and Representative Thompson for their leadership on this issue."**

Thompson said: **"Senator Feinstein has always shown a genuine interest in Northern California's coast and I am honored to have her support for this legislation which will protect some of this region's most precious lands. Together with Senator Boxer, I am confident we will make wilderness protection of these areas a reality."**

Specifically, the legislation would protect over a dozen areas including:

- The King Range proposed wilderness additions, which feature the longest stretch of undeveloped beach and coastal bluffs in the United States outside of Alaska.
- The Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel proposed wilderness additions, which surround the Middle Fork Eel River. The Middle Fork Eel River hosts between 30 and 50 percent of the state's summer-run steelhead trout population.
- The Trinity Alps proposed wilderness additions, which shelter the third-largest swath of unprotected old-growth in northern California.

Following discussions with Senator Feinstein, community leaders, forestry officials, environmentalists and other stakeholders, Senator Boxer and Representative Thompson agreed to make some modifications to their bill. Senator Feinstein will now join Senator Boxer and Representative Thompson as a cosponsor of the bill.

Modifications to the bill include removing the Orleans area from the previously introduced legislation and consulting with the Hoopa Tribe on any needed changes to wilderness boundaries adjacent to the tribe's reservation. The wilderness bill will be altered during committee consideration in order to reflect these changes.

Senator Feinstein, who is a member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, formally asked for a hearing on the bill as soon as possible in the Subcommittee on Forests and Public Land.

The Northern California Wilderness Bill protects by designating public lands as "wilderness" and segments of California rivers as "wild and scenic." These areas would remain open for recreational activities including horseback riding, fishing, hiking, backpacking, rock climbing, cross country skiing, and canoeing. Mining and drilling would be allowed to continue in areas where they are already leased or occurring, but any new starts for such activities would be prohibited.

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